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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4563  
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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU  
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8534  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3597  
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 2502  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 6296  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 6110  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2696  
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU  
RHMFIUU/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU  
RHMFIUU/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU  
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU  
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002909

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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2007

In Today's Papers

Calik Group Offers \$1.1 Billion for ATV-Sabah  
Today's papers report that Calik Group was the sole bidder in yesterday's auction for the ATV-Sabah media group. Calik submitted a \$1.1 billion offer to Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF) for the media group which includes the second rated television station in the country, a top circulation daily as well as several other paper and magazine publications. Milliyet highlights that the auction lasted only five minutes. Cumhuriyet says that Berat Albayrak, the son-in-law of PM Erdogan, is a General Manager at the Calik Group. The Samsun-Ceyhan pipe line project was also given to the Calik group earlier without any bid. The company manager's family ties with the government are causing speculation among opposition parties. CHP leader Deniz Baykal said that "this government is creating its own media." Milliyet reports that at the tender, the bidder was asked to raise the initial price, but the Calik Group refused to do so. The offer will be submitted to the fund's board for approval tomorrow.

PKK, Northern Iraq, DTP  
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet and others report that security operations on Gabar Mountain continue. Turkish General Staff (TGS) announced that eight more terrorists were killed yesterday. Sabah, Yeni Safak and Zaman quote US State Department Spokesman Tom Casey saying "Turkey does not need permission from the US" for military operations that stem from its national security concerns.

Meanwhile, answering journalists' questions in Athens, Foreign Minister Babacan said that "Barzani and the Kurdish Administration have not taken concrete steps to work with Turkey to eliminate the PKK", reported Sabah, Hurriyet, Radikal.

Milliyet adds that, during the budget talks at the parliament, DTP Mus Parliamentary Deputy Sirri Sakik said that the PKK is a reality for Turkey and AKP deputies reacted to him, "you are remaining a spectator to the terrorists".

Ahmedinejad Refers to US Report as Victory for Iran

All papers widely cover the US Intelligence report released Monday, which concluded that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in late 2003 and has shown no signs since of resuming it. Cumhuriyet and Milliyet said that Iranian President Ahmedinejad highlighted the report as a victory against the superpower. Sabah reports Secretary Rice's comments on the issue that "the report does not erase the danger" posed by Iran.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iran

"End of Iran the Crisis?"

Sami Kohen commented in mainstream daily Milliyet: "The NIE report on Iran's nuclear program provides key information that contradicts President Bush's statements on the issue. The report's conclusion, namely that Iran's nuclear weapons program ceased in 2003, caused political tremors around the world, including in Washington. The gist of the issue is whether Iran has fully given up on its nuclear weapons program. Given the current circumstances, Iran cannot resume its weapons program because such a measure would validate the Bush administration's claims against Iran. Even though President Bush expressed that Iran continues to be a threat, he seems to have lost the argument. Bush claims that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction were used to start the Iraq war. Such weapons have not been found. Because of the NIE report, Iran is acquitted. The issue is a serious debate in the US, and Democrats are urging the administration to revise its Iran strategy. Given the current picture, it's unlikely that Iran will cause a third world war."

"Relief"

Soli Ozel commented in the mainstream daily Sabah: "The NIE report provides significant information that invalidates claims about Iran

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made by the Bush administration and Israel. It also indicates that diplomatic measures and embargoes have actually worked on Iran. Following the NIE report, it is almost impossible for either the Bush administration or Israel to launch a military operation against Iran. It looks as if American intelligence rushed to prepare such a report in order to prevent VP Cheney from dragging the whole country into another adventure. With or without an optimistic perspective, the possibility for a strike against Iran has weakened. This fact alone offers some relief. In any case, developments in the region call for a continued close monitoring."

TV Highlights

NTV

Domestic News

Defense Industry Executive Committee held a meeting in Ankara yesterday to discuss new defense projects.

Counter-Terrorism Higher Board met in Ankara and expressed determination to continue the fight against terrorism.

One woman died in Antalya after she was swept away by flood waters caused by heavy rains in the area.

International News

Car bombs in Baghdad and three Northern Iraqi cities killed at least 23 people and injured more than 40 others.

Travelers going to Britain will have to submit biometric data by being fingerprinted and photographed.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has seen no progress in Cyprus over the last six months.

WILSON